REGION 6 REGIONAL RESPONSE TEAM (RRT)

2004 ANNUAL REPORT

REPORTING PERIOD: JANUARY, 2004 - DECEMBER, 2004

I. MAJOR ACTIVITIES

A. MAJOR / NOTEWORTHY RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

1. San Antonio Train Collision: On May 3, 2004 the National Response Center (NRC) notified EPA Region 6 of a Union Pacific (UP) train collision and derailment on a bridge crossing the San Antonio River just south of the town center area of the city. The derailment caused two engines and one haz-mat car to fall into the river which resulting in the spill of 5,800 gallons of fuel and 600 gallons of lubricating oil into the river.

   The San Antonio Fire Department responded immediately to the incident and began initial mitigation activities including the deployment mechanical boom at the site of the derailment and at strategic points down river. FOSC Richard Franklin along with members of the Superfund Technical Assessment and Response Team (START) responded to the accident and resultant spill.

   Other responders were the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), San Antonio Water System and the San Antonio River Authority.

   The spill was contained by the use of an under flow dam, containment boom and sorbent materials (sorbent pads and sorbent boom). The Union Pacific response contractor(Eagle Environmental) completed recovery of the remaining oil at the collection areas.

2. Macdona, Texas Train Collision (Chlorine Release): At approximately 05:03 on 28 June, 2004 in the town of Macdona, Texas a Union Pacific train collided with a Burlington Northern train, resulting in a derailment. The site is located in Bexar County, southwest of San Antonio, Texas.

   Chlorine and Ammonium nitrate cars ruptured and released product. Approximately 10,000 gallons of fuel were spilled from 4 wrecked locomotives. One railroad and two residential fatalities were confirmed, 43 others were hospitalized.

   EPA Region 6 Federal On-Scene Coordinators Scott Harris and Valmichael Leos responded with EPA START contractors to provide overall response coordination using Incident Command Structure (ICS) with Unified Command.

   A key operational function was offsite air monitoring for potentially affected areas. The EPA Command Post was co-located with the TCEQ Strike Team. The chlorine was off-loaded into frac-tanks.

3. T/S TORM MARY (Marine Safety Office, Port Arthur, TX): On 02 August 2004, the Coast Guard, along with other state and local agencies, responded to an estimated 30,000 gallons of #6 fuel oil spilled in the Neches River.

   The spill occurred at approximately 12:20 a.m., when a barge struck and pierced the starboard fuel tank of the tank ship (T/S) TORM MARY, which was anchored at the Sun Anchorage for a routine refueling operation. The TORM MARY, a 528-foot Danish flagged tank ship, was carrying Eurograde gasoline at the time of the incident.

The CG Federal On-Scene Coordinator (FOSC) closed a section of the Neches River from lighted beacon # 42 (just north of Dupont plant and the Naval Reserve Fleet) to the Veteran's Bridge.

A notice to mariners was issued informing the local ship traffic of the river closure. By the next day over 10 miles of the Neches River and the shoreline was impacted.

At the request of the FOSC, additional USCG personnel from MSO Morgan City, MSO New Orleans, MSO Corpus Christi, MSO Houston, MSU Lake Charles, and the Gulf Strike Team were sent to MSO Port Arthur to assist the Unified Command with cost documentation, site safety, and shoreline cleanup assessment.

The Scientific Support Coordinator (SSC) was also called and provided on-scene technical support. An incident-specific RRT was convened twice to approve the limited use of surface washing agents. The Unified Command focused on positioning removal equipment and boom where large pockets of oil were pooled from the spill.

Over 37,000 feet of boom was deployed and five large skimmers were placed to remove large pockets of oil from within the boom. Initially, cleanup resources focused on removing all significant amounts of pooled black oil that could not be safely corralled from the effects of passing vessels to facilitate the eventual reopening of the Neches River.

The closure of the river caused a significant economic impact for the Port Arthur area. Approximately 33 tows and 11 deep draft vessels were affected by the river closure. Overall, approximately seven major petrochemical plants slowed down operations due to the effects of the oil spill on port traffic.

The FOSC met with all facility representatives and other stakeholders to prioritize the movement of a limited number of vessels through a narrow channel opening contingent upon the effectiveness of overnight cleanup operations.

After four days, vessel traffic on the Neches River was limited to one-way, up or down bound. Prior to the conclusion of the response oil from the spill had impacted 28 miles of shoreline, wetlands, and dock areas. (See Next Topic)

Use of a Surface Washing Agent: In response to the T/V TORM MARY oil spill in the Neches River near Port Arthur, TX, the Unified Command requested that surface washing agents be approved by RRT VI for potential use in the industrial port area as a contingency plan.

The SSC contacted the USCG RRT VI representatives and requested that a conference call be setup to discuss an incident specific approval for utilization of surface washing agents. The specific request was that "lift and float" agents be allowed to enhance cleaning operations of vessels and hard structures at impacted facilities.

It was clearly understood that approval would require that any product used must be listed on the NCP Product Schedule and that personnel safety measures meet, at the minimum, the manufacture's recommendations.

RRT VI Emergency Response Pre-approval Guidelines To Decontaminate Vessels and Hard Structures In Port Areas Using Surface Washing Agents (22 January 2003) document was used as guidance during the response.

The RRT was convened and approval was granted by the RRT to use the "lift and float" surface-washing agent. Oil residues washed from treated surfaces were expected to float and be recoverable by standard mechanical removal practices. While not new, shoreline cleaners have not always been viewed positively.

In the past, some formulations were essentially dispersants and others were composed of relatively toxic solvents. Only agents that "lift and float" oil are generally considered for use in the environment. The Unified Command, under the authorization granted to the FOSC by the RRT, used shore line cleaning

agents during the response on a case-by-case basis.

The application of the shoreline cleaning agents was monitored for effectiveness and the NOAA SSC is preparing a detailed after action report to the RRT. On-scene visual observations indicated that the use of shoreline cleaning agents was highly successful for vessel cleaning. The primary type of cleaning agent used was PES-51.

4. RTF pyrotechnics, Marshall, Texas: RTF Pyrotechnics is a former manufacturer of explosives and pyrotechnic materials. The facility is located on Bussey Road (CR 4016) within an industrial park north of Marshall, Texas in Harrison County. The owner is currently incarcerated for violations related to the adjacent RTF Electroplating facility.

   Many of the products manufactured there were for military use, and were designed to simulate flares, grenades, landmines, booby traps, Stinger Missiles and mortars. Most materials were secured in a series of explosives magazines across the roughly 12.5 acre site.

   Hundreds of containers of bulk oxidizersand flammable solids are stored in four old wooden rail cars. Other buildings and structures contain various hazardous and/or unknown materials. Many of the containers are failing.

   EPA FOSC's Scott Harris and Steve Mason visited with the co-owner at her home in Marshall, Texas for the purpose of securing written permission to enter both of the RTF sites. After discussions she granted verbal permission for access to both facilities.

   After speaking with EPA counsel to confirm access, the FOSC's went first to the electroplating facility. Following a brief assessment of that site, they proceeded to the pyrotechnics site.

   Arriving at the pyrotechnics site, they observed a representative of the local electric utility leaving the property. The utility employee explained that he was removing the electric meters for lack of payment of past bills. He noted that there had been ongoing usage of the electricity by unknown persons for unknown activities.

   He was noticeably apprehensive about being on the site and described a history of "this place blowing up all the time when it was in business. Entry into the site was perceived by the FOSC's to be very hazardous at best.

   The site had what appeared to be an office at the front, and numerous buildings scattered across the remainder of the property. All of the buildings were padlocked. Several of them were marked as containing explosives.

   Other buildings were posted with static electricity warnings, indicating an explosion hazard within. There were numerous one gallon metal acetone cans scattered around the site that had what appeared to be bullet holes in them.

   The RRT was contacted and asked to convene to review findings at the site and to coordinate the activities of other agencies on site. FBI and ATF were contacted and arrived on site to conduct related investigations and assist with disposal operations.

5. Hurricane IVAN (Marine Safety Office, Mobile, AL): During the months of August and September 2004, several hurricanes entered the Gulf of Mexico causing major damage in Regions IV and VI. Major evacuations occurred in eastern Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida (panhandle) for Hurricane IVAN.

   More than 2 million residents along a 300-mile stretch of the Gulf Coast cleared out as Hurricane IVAN, a former 165-mph storm that killed 70 people in the Caribbean, moved toward the Gulf Coast. On September 16, 2004, Hurricane Ivan came ashore near Gulf Shores Beach, Alabama with 130-mph winds that inflicted the most serious damage along Florida's Panhandle.

IVAN spun off at least a dozen tornadoes in Florida, while creating a storm surge of 10-16 feet , topped by large battering waves.

A portion of a bridge on Interstate 10, the major east-west highway through the Panhandle, was washed away. Upon staff mobilization at Marine Safety Office, Mobile, Alabama, the FOSC, in coordination with the Incident Commander (Sector Command), dispatched response teams to the affected area to assess the extent of damage and pollution resulting from the hurricane.

The Unified Command (UC) consolidated the concerns and interests of representatives from state and federal governments. Region IV, EPA and NOAA (SSC) were dispatched to the Incident Command Post, in Mobile, to assist in the direction of assessment and mitigation of the pollution. Pollution/response contractors in addition to Coast Guard personnel were mobilized and deployed across three states.

Additionally, OSCs from Region IV EPA were deployed to assist in the assessment and mitigation of pollution. Three Basic Ordering Agreement (BOA) contractors were employed and their resources were totally expended requiring a contract with a fourth, non-BOA response company. Funding was obtained via Disaster Project numbers for affected areas in Florida, Alabama, and Mississippi.

The equipment mobilization during the first couple of days included but was not limited to: 16 vacuum-trucks, 6 workboats, numerous bulldozers/tractors and over 30 assorted dump trucks. Over 9,500 feet of assorted types of boom was deployed and over 40 military and civilian Coast Guard personnel to assess the pollution situation. Documentation is available for viewing in (Hurricane IVAN After Action Report) CG SAILS database.

6. Hurricane IVAN (Marine Safety Office, New Orleans, LA): On September 23, 2004, MSO NOLA, received notification of approximately four barrels of oil spilled in Breton Sound in Main Pass Block 69. When the case was closed on October 26, 2004, the estimated amount of spilled oil was 301,896 gallons, over 7000 barrels.

   The source was pipeline damage sustained during the hurricane at a crossing of the Shell Nakika and BP pipelines.

   The pipelines have been permanently repaired and the entire area was cleaned to the satisfaction of LA DEQ, LA Fish & Wildlife, U.S. Fish & Wildlife, and the CG FOSCR. At one time during the cleanup, the response contractor, Marine Spill Response Corporation (MSRC), had four oil spill response vessels on-scene skimming oil.

   Eleven thousand, five hundred feet of boom was deployed around the oil on the surface of the water, directly above the source of the discharge, and around shoreline at the end of Pass A Loutre. The use of dispersant was authorized on late afternoon of September 25, 2004, to be applied from the OSRV GRAND BAY via fire monitors directly at the source throughout the night.

   Dispersant application was recommended due to onshore winds that threatened the oil contamination of some 2000 birds at the Pass a Loutre Wildlife Refuge. A total of 350 gallons of Corexit 9527 was applied. The dispersant operation ended shortly after midnight when the sea state became too rough for on-water operations.

   Fortuitously, the winds also changed direction reducing the threat to the refuge. Dispersants were also applied by air twice in the pre-approved zone and once in the inshore/near-shore environment with incident specific concurrence from the RRT VI members. A total of 5000 gallons of Corexit 9500 was applied by aerial application during the response.

   Overall, dispersant application was reported to be efficient and effective by on-scene monitors. The total reported wildlife impacted was: 9 brown pelicans, 2 raccoons, 1 cormorant, 1 sanderling, 2 semi-palmated sandpipers, 5 seagulls, and 1 coot.

Marine Safety Office New Orleans personnel responded to a variety of other pollution reports and sightings after Hurricane IVAN made landfall including: a collapsed oil tank, a 2,226-gallon crude oil spill from an underwater pipeline at South Pass Block 1, a 8,400-gallon spill into secondary containment from an above ground storage tank located near Baptiste Collette, and numerous drums and tanks that washed ashore from the storm surge.

7. Detco Chemical Company in Conway, Arkansas: An explosion resulting in a fire occurred at SS on January 6, 2004. The explosion is suspected to have originated in the aerosols production area of the facility but the specific cause was unknown at time of the response and is believed to be accidental.

   The facility is located at 605 East Robins Street in Conway, Arkansas. The fire occurred in the approximately 35,000 square foot facility. The company produces industrial cleaner using raw solvent and caustic materials.

   An evacuation within 1/2 mile of the facility was undertaken by local officials and Interstate 40 was shut down. Two injuries were reported, one serious and one minor. Chemicals of concern included hydrofluoric acid , sulfuric acid and multiple cleaning fluids (TCE, PCE, and DCE.

   EPA mobilized an OSC and Superfund Technical Assessment Response Team (START) contractors who were dispatched to the site. The Govenor of Arkansas mobilized a National Guard Civil Support Team (CST) to the site as well.

   The fire was contained by the Conway FD by 08:30 hours, January 6, 2004

B. RRT MEETINGS

The RRT VI winter meeting (USCG) will be held at Sheraton Hotel, South Padre Island, TX, on 25-26 January 2005.

During 2004, RRT VI was convened on several occasions. One instance was for member notification of various terrorist threat level condition changes. The Coast Guard and EPA also convened the RRT to discuss several major incident specific situations as noted above.

C. COMMITTEE AND WORKING GROUP UPDATES

1. RRT VI Near Shore Environment Dispersant Expedited Approval Process: During the past year, the RRT VI Preparedness Committee, chaired by Dr. Karolien Debusschere, of the Louisiana Oil Spill Coordinators Office (LOSCO), has been working on a document which describes an expedited information gathering and decision-making process, relative to the potential use of chemical dispersants on oil spills in, or threatening the Near Shore Environment (known as NSE and defined as within 3 miles of the shoreline or in waters less than 10 meters deep) of Region VI.

   For oil spills in or threatening the Near Shore Environment (NSE), it is probable that the time frame for impact of near shore and shoreline resources will be shorter than for spills covered by the Offshore Pre-authorization Process. Therefore, if dispersants are to be used in the NSE, it is important that the dispersant use decision be made as quickly as possible.

   This Expedited Approval Process (EAP) attempts to focus the information gathering and decision making process on the most important or key questions while at the same time minimizing the RRT's focus on the operational parameters that can be handled, coordinated, or enforced by the Federal On Scene Coordinator (FOSC).

   This is not a dispersant use pre-authorization, and therefore RRT VI approval is required on a case-by-case basis with the use of this EAP. The goal of this document is to expedite the approval process specified in the RRT VI Regional Contingency Plan Subpart H Authorization. This EAP

document will be presented to RRT VI at the winter meeting in South Padre Island, TX.

II. GENERAL PREPAREDNESS AND CONTINGENCY PLANNING

A. TRAINING

1. ICS 200-300 training was provided for MSO Morgan City in support of the Industry led PREP exercise (14-16 September, 2004). Participants in the training were Coast Guard, State of Louisiana and British Petroleum response personnel. The three-day ICS training was provided by the Gulf Strike Team at MSO Morgan City.

2. EPA FOSC annual training was conducted at Phoenix, Arizona from November 15 thru 16, 2004. The training was hosted and conducted by the Office of Superfund, Technology, Renovation (OSTRI), and Innovation, EPA Headquarters.

3. HAZWOPER 8 hour refresher training, HAZMAT Chemical, and ICS training were provided for First Responders at the Hot Zone Conference during October, 2004.

B. EXERCISE / WORKSHOPS

1. Salvage and Marine Firefighting Forum (Update): On September 7-8, 2004, MSO Port Arthur and the Eighth Coast Guard District response branch, in conjunction with Sabine-Neches Chiefs Association, Southwest Louisiana Mutual Aid Association and Lamar Port Arthur State College, hosted a Salvage and Marine Firefighting Forum. The event took place at the Park Center Lamar College.

   The objective of this forum was to familiarize local industry and government agencies with their roles and responsibilities in Marine Salvage and Fire Fighting.

   Forum participants identified regional Marine Salvage and Fire Fighting resources and explored the need for partnerships with local, state and federal agencies to minimize the economic impact to commercial industry and the community in the case of a vessel fire in state territorial waters.

   Presentations covered the Unified Command System, legal/regulatory mandates, stability and salvage considerations, vessel familiarization, maritime firefighting responsibilities and equipment demonstrations.

2. Spill Of Opportunity Update (TGLO): A DRAFT of the final document, Spill Of Opportunity (SOO), incorporating all RRT VI member comments, was completed in late August 2004, and forwarded to the Project Steering Committee for review.

   In addition, a copy of the draft document was sent to Mr. Charlie Henry, NOAA, SSC, for Region VI, for coordination within the USCG District office and NOAA, since the last issues to be identified were related to comments received from the National Marine Fisheries Services (NMFS).

   Minor editorial changes were identified by the Steering Committee, and the document was revised in early September 2004. Comments were received from Mr. Henry during the week of 15 November 2004 confirming that the changes in the draft final document had addressed the NMFS concerns.

3. Operation Black Leg, an (ICS Structure Exercise) conducted at Dallas, Texas during Octover, 2004, involved all elements of the EPA Region 6 command structure.

4. Exercise Ruby Slipper, a Radiological Exercise was conducted at Kansas City, Kansas in July, 2004.

5. MEXUS Update: ON 25-27 May 2004, Shell Exploration and Production Company sponsored the third MEXUS Gulf Joint exercise, referred to as MEXUS GULF 2004. The exercise was conducted in Matamoros, Tamaulipas, Mexico.

Building up from the previous two exercises, the objectives were to exercise and identify joint response procedures following a significant impact to the shared shorelines. Specifically, the four identified objectives included:

- Identify Natural Resources Damage Assessment (NRDA) Procedures in Mexico
- Address Trans-boundary movement Procedures of collected waste and contaminated equipment with emphasis on movement from Mexico to the U.S.
- Identify joint procedures for clean-up and oiled wildlife boundary and field communications.
- Over 250 players representing 30 agencies from both countries participated in the exercise.

7. Other significant exercises conducted in Region 6 during the year were:

- Defense Exercise UD-04, 2/19/2004
- Pine Bluff, (Pine Bluff Arsenal), 2/06/2004
- Global Mirror, 8/30/2004

C. FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL PLANNING AND COORDINATION EFFORTS

1. Maritime Transportation Safety Act Plans: In the Eighth Coast Guard District, there are 1351 Maritime Transportation Safety Act (MTSA) regulated facilities. Of that number, 1141 required to have a Facility Security Plan (FSP).

   As of November 22, 2004, 907 facilities have received a FSP Approval Letter and 105 facilities have met the criteria and received an Alternative Security Plan (ASP) Approved Letter. The remaining 129 facilities have interim letters, which permit them to operate to an extent. By December 31, 2004, all 1141 facilities are to have a FSP Approval Letter or ASP Approval Letter. Currently, no facility is shutdown for MTSA deficiencies.

2. Region 6 Regional Inland Contingency Plan (RICP), The Fish and Wildlife and Sensitive Environments Plan (FWSEP) Annex:

   The Department of the Interior representatives to the Region 6 Response Team is coordinating work on the development of the FWSEP Annex to the RICP.

   At the June 2004 RRT Co-Chairs, Natural Resource Agency representatives and state primary representatives for their review and comment draft databases of threatened and endangered species, and sensitive areas listed by state and county were provided to EPA Region 6 so that a determination can be made as to their compatibility with existing databases.

   Eventually, On-Scene Coordinators should have the capability to rapidly access the information to determine the need for immediate input form resource managers on response decisions in order to minimize spill impacts to those resources.

3. The Louisiana CARER Project in response to specific LDEQ requirements was started in late 2004 and is expected to continue through 2005

4. The E-Plan Project continues to expand in Region 6.

5. Efforts are on going to update the RICP.

6. EPA Region 6 has initiated Emergency Response Reviews, which are designed to:

- Share information about hazardous materials response practices and lessons learned from responses,

- Heighten awareness of the need for and promote safe and effective emergency response to chemical accidents within a community,
- Build cooperation among sources, government agencies, and others.

The report normally shall contain:

- Introduction of Review Program
- Review Team Members
- Attendees of Interview
- Synopsis of the incident
- Observations / Recommendations of Review Team
- Notification / Communication
- Response Strategies / Actions
- Chain of Authority - Incident Command System / Unified Command
- Response coordination upon organizations (local / State / Federal / Responsible Party)
- Shelter in Place / Evacuation effectiveness
- Emergency Response Equipment Use
- Response Personnel Training / Expertise

III. PERSONNEL CHANGES

Eighth Coast Guard District, Captain Ronald Branch, Chief, Marine Safety, Security, and Environmental Protection Division, has assumed the role of Co-Chair for Regional Response Team 6.

CDR Nathalie Valley, Chief, Response Branch, is the Coast Guard's Alternate Co-Chair. As of 21 August 2004, Mr. Wayne Rickard, DHS-FEMA has resigned his position with FEMA and will no longer be an active member of RRT VI. Ms. Lorie LaFon, Mr. Joe Howard and Mr. Mike Goldworthy will be the point of contact for FEMA.

Charles Gazda, EPA Region 6 retired in January, 2004 and was succeeded by Ragan Broyles. Craig Carroll, EPA Region 6 was appointed Alternate EPA Co-Chair, and Steve Mason, EPA RRT Coordinator.

IV. ISSUES OR OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS REQUIRING NRT ATTENTION

A. National Response Plan Roll-Out

Part of the new National Response Plan roll-out will occur in 5 cities around the country. The roll-out will consist of a one day seminar for responders and stakeholders, and a pre-meeting with elected officials and private sector leaders. The members of RRT 6 strongly recommend that one of the cities visited for the NRP roll-out be a city along the Gulf of Mexico.